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WHAT THE NAVY GIVES TO AND EXPECTS FROM THE CHELSEA NURSE

BY BERTHA I. MEYERS

Chelsea, Mass.

When I first discussed my plan of signing up for the Navy, the following question was asked me: "Do you realize that you will be asked to give the same unquestioning obedience to your officers as is given by the soldier or sailor to his superiors, that you must go wherever and whenever you are sent?" Having learned obedience in my training school days, I had no fear on that score, and felt it would be somewhat of a relief to have some one else decide where and when I should change my residence.

After the usual preliminaries, I was assigned to duty in a Naval hospital; being sent, much to my satisfaction, to a station located in a city to which I was a stranger.

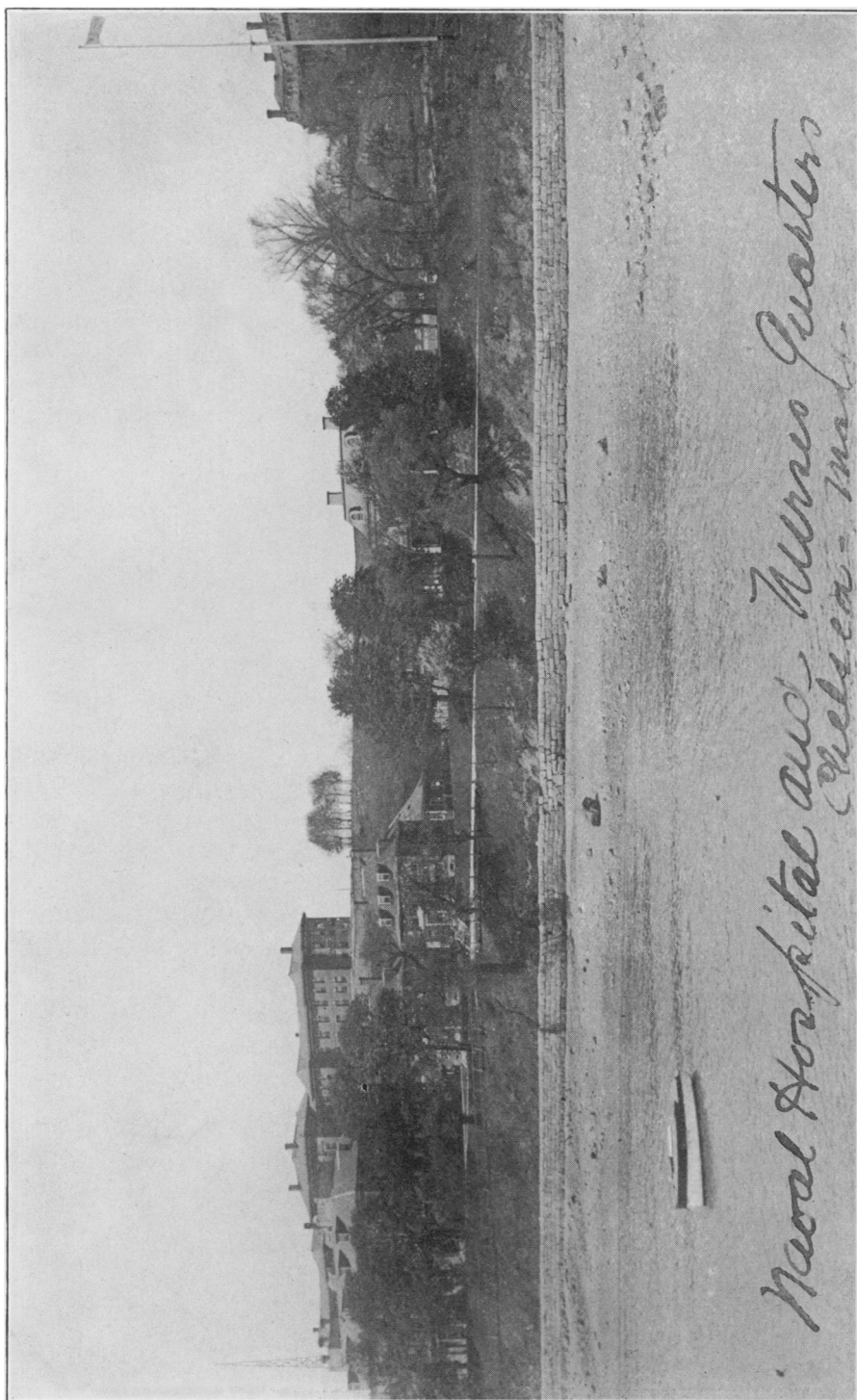
My reception at the nurses' quarters was most cordial and is, I think, typical to all nurses entering the Service, regular or reserves. As soon as my trunk and a few books were unpacked, I felt quite at home.

No special means of entertainment is provided, but one does not mope, except by choice; one may dance at the music of a pianola, play cards, read, knit, converse, or if she so desires, may retire to her room. There is always the city with its varied attractions in the winter, the delightful country offering many opportunities for renewing our acquaintance with the birds and flowers, and this year a new tennis court.

Our quarters are all that one could desire; bright, large, airy rooms, a few single, and the larger ones not over-crowded. Provision is being made in an adjoining building to quarter the necessary increase of the nursing staff. We feel, when reading of the hardships endured cheerfully by the sailors and soldiers, that we are too comfortable.

The hours are shorter than in most civilian hospitals, the unit of a hospital day being eight hours, continuous or in broken periods; the period of night duty is short, one month. A separate room for sleeping is provided for night nurses who occupy rooms with day nurses; in fact, every reasonable comfort is provided for, and in return is asked a conscientious devotion to professional duties. One of my strongest impressions is the high ideal which the Navy surgeon holds of the graduate nurse. He expects her, because she is a nurse, to be of the best type of woman.

The duties of the nurse in a U. S. Naval Hospital correspond to





Living Room, Nurses' Quarters, Chelsea, Mass.

those of a head nurse in a ward of any large civilian hospital, supervision of the general conduct of the ward, under the surgeon in charge of that ward. As her assistants, she has the hospital corps men of varying grades and experience. These have had a preliminary course of three or more months at one of the several Naval Training Schools, but for the teaching of practical nursing procedures, the nurse is responsible. Since it is on these men that the surgeon on the battleship depends for assistance in the care of the sick and wounded sailors, every nurse can readily see her opportunity to send her influence to the front, even though she may not go herself.

SOME THINGS BEING DONE FOR THE CONVALESCENT

By MARY H. DuBOSE

Chief Nurse, U. S. N.

The most trying time in the life of our patient from the acute stage of his illness until his complete restoration to health and return to duty, is that period dating from his first day out of bed until he is considered strong enough to make his first independent liberty. The influences brought to bear upon our men at this stage of convalescence, have become a matter for earnest consideration and thought on the part of our hospital authorities. The prime business of a military hospital is the rapid restoration of men to active duty. Consequently, any factor which may aid this result, immediately assumes a definitely important aspect. That a man's mental and emotional state may have upon him an actual physiological effect, is a question which has passed beyond the field of speculation. It has become a force to be reckoned with in the care of the sick. Though our personnel does consist so largely of young, high-spirited boys—even they cannot be considered immune from this period of depression, due partly to physical weakness and, to a certain degree, to nostalgia, from which even the strongest of us can hardly hope to escape at such a time.

In the Brooklyn, New York, Hospital, we have met this problem in various ways. To begin, the men are visited twice a week by representatives of certain well-recognized national organizations, who bring them fruit, flowers, magazines and games; in fact, they have introduced a note of personal interest and friendliness, to which the men have responded in like spirit. I have noticed many a reserved, taciturn, or homesick boy fairly expand under this influence. Genuine friendships have been formed, and when the boys are able to get out, they have found a welcome awaiting them in the homes of these warm-hearted, patriotic women, usually, themselves, the wives or mothers of men in the Navy or National Army.